

Minutes of the  
Edina Park Board  
June 10, 2008  
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Hulbert, Rob Presthus, Randy Meyer, Howard Merriam, George Klus, Mike Damman, Dan Peterson, Jeff Sorem, Ray O'Connell, Todd Fronek, Carolyn Nelson

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton, Ed MacHolda

**I. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 8, 2008 PARK BOARD MINUTES**

George Klus MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 8, 2008 PARK BOARD MINUTES.  
Dan Peterson SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Countryside Park Master Plan - Mr. Fronek stated that a thank you goes out to Mr. Hulbert, Mr. Merriam, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Sorem for attending the Countryside Park meeting. He noted that the board members were put into different groups for discussions with the residents.

Mr. Sorem indicated that after talking to the residents in his group he felt there were four main items. First, they want the hockey rink back. Second, there is no need for a walking path due to the fact that Bredesen Park is so close by. Third, they would like better signage for the parking lot that is shared by the church and lastly they really want to keep the tennis courts.

Mr. Peterson noted he also was impressed with how passionate his group was for wanting to keep the tennis courts. He stated that he didn't feel there was a lot of interest in having a hockey rink. There was a reasonable amount of interest in having a small off-leash dog area. In addition, there was quite a bit of interest in trying to get parking off of Olinger and move it to the parking lot that the city already has.

Mr. Merriam commented that he concurs with what has been said and was surprised at how many people want to see the tennis courts stay in the park.

Mr. Hulbert noted that he was in the same group as Mr. Sorem and noted that the people really emphasized the desire to have the hockey rink back. He stated that his group liked the A and B concepts and looked at hybrids of both. He commented that a dog park was not quite as important in his group.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he agrees with what has been said, they definitely want the hockey rink back.

Mr. Keprios stated that he agrees with everything that has been said. He noted that the architects took notes that capture the sentiment of the people who expressed their opinions at the meeting (see attached). Mr. Keprios explained this is not something

that's going to happen overnight. He pointed out that they will continue to provide a skating area in the winter and that everything will stay just as they are until they get a plan in place that they can all buy into and get a master plan adopted. He stressed that they are also going to need to figure out how they are going to finance it whether it be through the capital plan and develop it in phases or take a more aggressive approach and solicit donations and/or pursue a referendum.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that he is going to give the architects some direction to get to the next level and create a final master plan. He noted that at the August or September Park Board meeting he will have a final concept plan that will be a reflection of what they have heard the community wants.

Mr. Klus asked Mr. Keprios if once he comes up with a preliminary plan will there be another work session with the neighborhood. Mr. Keprios replied he thinks once the Park Board has a plan they want to propose to the neighborhood he thinks it would be appropriate to hold a public hearing and would ask the City Council if that's how they would like it to be handled so that they are not duplicating efforts.

- B. 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Plan – Mr. Keprios went through the items he would like to see eliminated and the items he would like to see added to the 2009 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that they recently learned that it is possible to develop a new athletic field at Pamela Park. Mr. Keprios explained that what he would propose that the Park Board do is hold a public hearing for all of the proposed projects for Pamela Park for the next five years and let the neighborhood have their say. He explained that this way it will help the Park Board decide if they are really going to plan for a quarter of a million dollars to have lights at the three softball fields. In addition, neighborhood input should be sought via a Public Hearing on plans for a new \$400,000 athletic field with lights, expansion of parking lots, playground equipment replacement and all other CIP projects proposed for Pamela Park.

Mr. Fronek entertained a motion to approve the CIP as laid out on the proposed changes to the revised five year CIP.

Mr. Klus replied that he would like to make that motion with the caveat that each time projects come up on the CIP that a public hearing is held with the neighbors prior to the project so that the neighborhood can give their feedback. George Klus MOVED TO APPROVE THE REVISED CIP WITH THE STIPULATION THAT THERE WOULD BE PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR EACH ITEM ON THE CIP BEFORE INITIATING THE PROJECTS.

Mr. Klus commented that he thinks it has to be on each item because he thinks they learned a lesson from trying to put fencing at Pamela Park this time and the neighbors were very concerned.

Mr. Meyer asked what is the requirement in order for a public hearing to be held, what is generally the rule of thumb? Mr. Keprios replied there really is no written rule or standing policy; however, they try to use their best judgment and anticipate what they believe to be controversial. Mr. Keprios pointed out that he did not foresee the fencing at Pamela Park to become a controversial issue like it was. He stated that had he seen that coming, he definitely would have called for a public hearing. Mr. Keprios indicated that he doesn't know if there needs to be a public hearing for a batting cage or for the natural resources inventory or for the replacement windows at Arneson Acres. Mr. Keprios noted that if there's an item that's going to affect the neighborhood at all then they need to inform them. Mr. Klus responded that the batting cages are part of the whole Pamela Park public hearing process. He commented that on some of the smaller items there may be some people in the community who might want to give some input on what's looked at and stated that he thinks it's important to at least open that up to a public hearing to let those people give their input.

Ray O'Connell SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he would like to CALL THE QUESTION.

Mr. Damman stated that he doesn't agree that the Park Board mandate that. He indicated that the staff is intelligent enough to know when it's needed. Mr. Klus replied that he is not questioning the intelligence of the staff but rather is trying to take a more proactive stance by letting the community know that we do want them to be part of the process.

Mr. Merriam commented that he thinks this really deserves an entire agenda item discussion because they need to look at the whole idea of what requires a public hearing and what doesn't. Mr. Merriam stated that he thinks it needs to be a staff decision until they can come up with some kind of a tripping mechanism definition.

Mr. Meyer noted that he thinks they need to do some research to understand what are other communities doing and what are their standards, so that they can compare. He commented that he would like to give staff the opportunity to do a little bit of their due diligence so that we are creating a policy that they can live by and the Park Board can support. Mr. Meyer suggested that they separate the motion to table or add to a future meeting a discussion about when public hearings are held on behalf of the Park Board and for now just look at the CIP.

Mr. Presthus commented that he tends to side with trusting the staff because realistically, if they start holding a public hearing for every last little change nothing is going to get accomplished. He noted that he is for public hearings on the bigger issues. He stated that he tends to side with the last two comments that further information needs to be gathered on what's best for the city as far as being efficient and moving forward.

Mr. Hulbert noted that he thinks Mr. Meyer stated it perfectly. He added that there is a reason why the city has a staff to make some of these discretionary calls as to what

matters do need to have a public hearing. He noted that if they decide to do it they are going to need some sort of a tripping mechanism which might be too much to handle here. Mr. Fronek stated that he tends to agree with Mr. Hulbert.

Mr. O'Connell WITHDREW HIS SECOND.

MOTION DIED FOR A LACK OF A SECOND.

Mr. Fronek entertained a new motion TO APPROVE THE REVISED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN. Howard Merriam MOVED TO APPROVE. Dan Peterson SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Fronek asked Mr. Keprios if he could provide some direction on how to handle public hearings in the future. Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board if they would entertain a motion or at least give a consensus to give staff the green light to call for a public hearing for all of the Pamela Park improvements this year.

The Park Board unanimously agreed by consensus.

- C. Mission Statement – Mr. Keprios indicated that it would be helpful to know if the majority of the Park Board members agree with the new proposed language at least in concept. Mr. Keprios explained that it has long been his view that parks and recreation serves a much greater purpose that better defines the value of the department's mission.

Mr. Keprios stated that since he has sent this out he has heard some really good feedback from Park Board members and staff that they don't like the language "to sustain and improve the uncommonly high quality of life enjoyed by residents and businesses ....." Mr. Keprios explained that the comment that he is hearing is that it would be more appropriate to just eliminate "uncommonly high" and go with "quality of life". Mr. Keprios indicated that what's in the staff report is something that he would recommend making an amendment to take out the terminology "uncommonly high" and just say "improves the quality of life".

Mr. Sorem suggested that he would like to see the word "uncommonly" removed but leave in "high".

George Klus CALLED THE QUESTION.

Mr. Fronek stated that they have a motion on the floor to remove the word "uncommonly" from the proposed mission statement.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he thinks "quality of life" can stand by itself and that "uncommonly high" is just awkward language.

Mr. Fronek stated the motion on the floor to APPROVE THE MISSION STATEMENT AS IT READS REMOVING THE WORD “UNCOMMONLY”.

MOTION CARRIED. Ray O’Connell ABSTAINED.

### **III. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Park Board Assignments – Mr. Keprios asked if everyone was comfortable with their park assignments to which it was noted yes. Mr. Fronek requested that each Park Board member know what is going on at their parks.
- B. Board and Commission Liaison Reports – Ray O’Connell – Mr. O’Connell gave an up-to-date report to the Park Board on the Community Education Services Board and the Energy and Environment Commission.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- A. Pamela Park Fence – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that he has heard from a few neighbors who are not very happy with the black vinyl fence that was recently put in at Pamela Park. He commented that he didn’t think there would be any controversy since he had not heard from anyone when they last put in fencing at Pamela Park on field #1. Mr. Keprios stated that it has been a learning lesson and that in the future this is something where he would definitely send out a notice to the neighborhood.

Bruce Johnson, 4601 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, informed the Park Board that he is the President of the Edina Girls Fast Pitch Association. He stated that he would like to applaud Park and Recreation and the City Council for doing what he thinks is the right thing not only for girl’s fast pitch, but for the community and Park and Recreation as a whole. Mr. Johnson handed out pictures and stated that he doesn’t think from an aesthetic perspective that it dramatically affects the aesthetics of the park.

Mike Davis, 6512 Warren Avenue, informed the Park Board that he is a board member on the Edina Girls Fast Pitch Association and that he understands that the fences have changed the park a little bit and that they are permanent. He commented that he also understands that the residents of the park get a little possessive of the park and that possibly some of the activities that they normally would do there have changed. However, he feels the overall benefits to the community outweigh the small sacrifices that may have been made at the park.

Mr. Klus stated that he knows that each of the athletic associations in the city are willing to work with the neighbors on any issue and even though the opponents did not attend tonight’s meeting he would encourage the Girls Fast Pitch Association to try to work out any issues to see if there are things they can do to make the park what they hope it can be.

Mr. Davis suggested that when notices are sent out for neighborhood meetings he thinks the users of the parks should be informed as well. He stated that these are community parks and everyone should have input whether they are neighbors or users of the park.

**V. UPDATES FROM STAFF**

- A. Hope Kids – Mr. Keprios complimented the Park Board on approving the Hope Kids special event at Edinborough Park. He noted that they had over 350 in attendance.

**VI. PARK BOARD COMMENTS**

- A. Power Point Presentation for the Public - Mr. Meyer made a suggestion that earlier when they went through the Capital Improvement Plan they had a nice colored outline to look at, however, the public could not see it. Therefore, it would be great, if in the future if they could show a power point presentation or something like that so that people can see what we are looking at and discussing and give clarity as far as what is going on. Mr. Meyer commented that the Capital Improvement Plan really gives a nice snapshot of where the park system is going in the next few years and the spaces they plan to renovate or upgrade.
- B. Public Hearings - Mr. Meyer pointed out that he thinks in the next couple of months they need to have a discussion on when to hold public hearings. He stated that he thinks staff needs to be clear on what the expectations are of the board. Mr. Meyer indicated that it may also make sense to incorporate the City Council at some point in those discussions and sort of frame that city wide on what we think of public hearings and when they are necessary. He stated that he does think they need to incorporate the public more in the process but at the same time they need to frame that so everyone is clear on what and when they are doing that.
- C. Artificial Turf Versus Real Grass - Mr. Peterson asked Mr. Keprios if sometime he could do a cost difference between artificial turf and real grass as well as is there an environmental reason why synthetic would be better than grass. Mr. Keprios replied he would be happy to provide that report.
- D. Thank You to Randy Meyer – Mr. Merriam wanted to publicly thank Randy Meyer for all of his hard work. He is a member of multiple boards and commissions and is a good role model for us.

MEETING ADJOURNED.